

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TEGUCI 02787 020205Z

62

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 OMB-01 PC-01 SCS-03 SCA-01

/061 W

----- 019724

O R 302147Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 481

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 2787

C O R R E C T E C C O P Y (TO TEXTS)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: FURTHER CONSEQUENCES OF UNC-ARMY CONFRONTATION

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 2738, 2768

BEGIN SUMMARY. A DELEGATION OF THE HONDURAN CATHOLIC CHURCH MET WITH CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR ON EVENING OF JUNE 27 TO DISCUSS PRESENT UNSETTLED SITUATION. THE CHURCH HIERARCHY ISSUED A DECLARATION THAT WAS READ OR DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY ON SUNDAY MORNING JUNE 29. THE DECLARATION DESCRIBES THE CONCERN THE CHURCH FEELS ABOUT THE ACCUSATIONS MADE AGAINST PRIESTS AND MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH. THE GOVERNMENT IS FACED WITH REDUCING CAMPESINO PRESSURES WITHOUT CAUSING DISMAY IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND, AT THE SAME TIME, IT MUST DEAL WITH THE RELIGIOUS QUESTION IN A MANNER THAT DOES NOT WIDEN THE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TEGUCI 02787 020205Z

PRESENT CHURCH-STATE DISAGREEMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. A DELEGATION OF THE HONDURAN CATHOLIC CHURCH HEADED BY MONSIGNOR SANTOS, ARCHBISHOP OF TEGUCIGALPA, HAD THREE HOUR MEETING WITH CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR AND HIS ADVISORS ON EVENING OF JUNE 27. PRIOR TO THE MEETING THE ARCH-BISHOP EXPRESSED HIS DEEP CONCERN ABOUT THE ACTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT CONCERNING THE EXPULSION AND MISTREATMENT OF CATHOLIC PRIESTS AND NUNS. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE CHURCH IS NOT CONNECTED TO THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY OR WITH ANY OTHER PARTY.

2. THE CATHOLIC HIERARCHY MET IN TEGUCIGALPA ON THE EVENING OF JUNE 28 TO CONSIDER WHAT ACTIONS THEY SHOULD TAKE. A DECLARATION WAS DRAFTED AND WAS READ FROM THE PULPITS OR DISTRIBUTED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 29. THE MAIN POINTS FOLLOW:

A. THE AUTHORITIES OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HAVE MET TOGETHER TO CONSIDER THE SITUATION. THE CHURCH IS GREATLY DISTURBED BY THE JUTICALPA TRAGEDY AND THE ACCUSATIONS BEING MADE AGAINST CHURCH PERSONNEL;

B. THE SITUATION IS EXTREMELY CONFUSED BUT IT HAS BEEN POSSIBLE TO VERIFY CERTAIN FACTS;

C. FOUR PRIESTS AND THREE NUNS WERE RELEASED FROM POLICE CUSTODY BUT HAVE BEEN FORBIDDEN TO RETURN TO THEIR RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES;

D. RADIO PAZ DE CHOLUTECA, A CHURCH-SPONSORED STATION, HAS BEEN FORBIDDEN TO BROADCAST;

E. THE RADIO OPERATED BY CATHOLIC PRIESTS IN PROGRESO, DEPARTMENT OF YORO, WAS CONFISCATED BY THE POLICE;

F. THE PRESENT WHEREABOUTS OF TWO PRIESTS IS STILL UNKNOWN;

G. THERE IS GREAT CONCERN AMONG THE PEOPLE CONCERNING THE RETURN OF RELIGIOUS PERSONNEL; AND

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEGUCI 02787 020205Z

H. THE CHURCH HOPES THAT THE GOVERNMENT CAN RESOLVE THE OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE CHURCH AS A CONSEQUENCE OF RECENT EVENTS.

3. THE THREE PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS WHO HAD BEEN DETAINED BY THE POLICE (FSP) HAD ALL BEEN RELEASED BY THE EVENING OF JUNE 28. TO THE EMBASSY'S KNOWLEDGE, ONLY ONE CATHOLIC PRIEST OF U.S. NATIONALITY STILL REMAINS UNACCOUNTED FOR.

RUMORS CONTINUE TO CIRCULATE THAT THE NUMBER OF DEATHS AND WOUNDINGS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY AMOUNT TO CONSIDERABLY MORE THAN THOSE ALREADY ANNOUNCED BY THE GOVERNMENT. THE PRESIDENT OF THE CGT, JULIAN LAGOS, THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF UNC, PEDRO MENDOZA, AND SOME MEMBERS OF EACH ORGANIZATION'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ARE STILL BEING DETAINED BY THE POLICE.

4. MEDIA TREATMENT OF THE SITUATION HAS BEEN EXTENSIVE. CONSERVATIVE LA PRENSA HAS TAKEN THE LINE OF REGRETTING THE TRAGEDY BUT AT THE SAME TIME POINTING OUT THAT IT WAS CAUSED BY THE UNC LEADERSHIP'S PRESSURE TACTICS. LIBERAL TIEMPO HAS GENERALLY PLAYED ON THE THEME THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT ADOPT A POLICY OF REPRESSION BECAUSE THAT WILL MAKE HONDURAS'S SITUATION EVEN MORE CRITICAL THAN IT IS AT PRESENT.

5. COMMENT: THE GOVERNMENT IS FACED WITH AN INTER-CONNECTED SERIES OF PROBLEMS. ON THE ONE HAND, THEY HAVE TO CONTROL THE CAMPESINOS OR THEIR ENTIRE LAW AND ORDER IMAGE WILL CRUMBLE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THEY DON'T WANT TO ADOPT MEASURES THAT THE PRIVATE SECTOR STRONGLY OPPOSES. THEREFORE, THEY HAVE TO DEVISE A PLAN TO CALM CAMPESINO PRESSURES WHILE AT THE SAME TIME AVOIDING A CONFLICT WHICH COULD LEAD TO FURTHER DISINVESTMENT AND LACK OF TRUST ON THE PART OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR. IN ADDITION TO THESE PROBLEMS, THE GOV MUST DEAL WITH THE CHURCH SO THAT THE PRESENT GULF BETWEEN THE TWO DOES NOT BECOME MORE SERIOUS. THE ONE THING THAT HONDURAS DOES NOT NEED AT THIS DIFFICULT JUNCTURE IS A CHURCH-STATE CONFLICT.
SOWASH

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, POLICIES, ARRESTS, RELIGIOUS GROUPS, CHURCH STATE RELATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TEGUCI02787
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750228-0607
From: TEGUCIGALPA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975062/aaaaabgk.tel
Line Count: 145
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 TEGUCIGALPA 2738, 75 2768
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 SEP 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <15 DEC 2003 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FURTHER CONSEQUENCES OF UNC-ARMY CONFRONTATION
TAGS: PINT, HO, CGT, NATIONAL CAMPESINO UNION
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006